AFRICA RENEWAL

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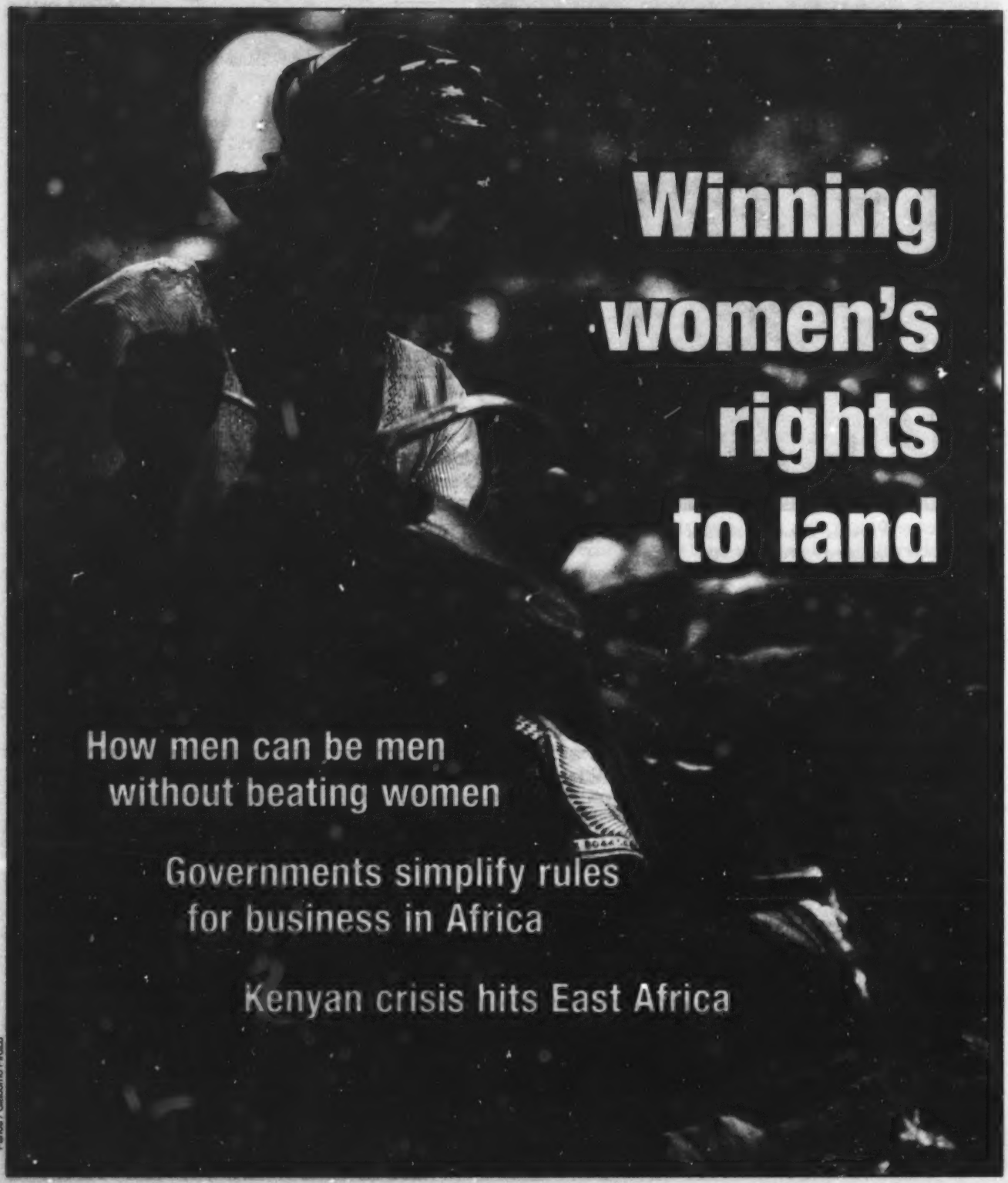

Winning women's rights to land

How men can be men without beating women

Governments simplify rules for business in Africa

Kenyan crisis hits East Africa

Panos / Giacomo Pirozzi

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AFRICA RENEWAL

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East Africa feels blows of Kenyan crisis

Economic and social repercussions affect entire region

By **Mary Kimani**

Kenya's post-election violence, which claimed an estimated 1,000 lives and displaced 350,000 people, appears to have abated. An agreement at the end of February to share power between government and opposition leaders has raised hopes of a return to stability. Because of Kenya's role as an economic powerhouse in the East African region, the seemingly brief crisis has already had significant economic and social repercussions well beyond the country's borders, and many worry that a resumption of conflict could have truly devastating consequences.

Violence broke out in Kenya on 30 December after Mwai Kibaki, the incumbent, was declared winner of the presidential election over Raila Odinga, despite objections by the opposition and election observers that the vote tally was seriously flawed. In addition to attacks by armed groups from the two sides, protesters' roadblocks along the main highways between Kenya and neighbouring countries curtailed trade and manufacturing in the region.

Such blockages, along with other economic disruptions, will likely slow economic growth throughout East Africa. Before the unrest, the five countries of the East African Community — Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda — expected to see their combined gross domestic product grow by 6 per cent in 2008. Economic analysts now predict that the region's growth rate will be at least 1.5 percentage points lower.

The ripples of the crisis have spread even wider. Blocked roads and vandalized rail lines have also hampered the transportation of humanitarian assistance to vulnerable groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and southern Sudan.

The power-sharing agreement, mediated on behalf of the African Union by Kofi Annan, a former UN Secretary-General, with support from a UN regional team, helped bring a halt to the violence. However, Donald Steinberg, deputy president of the International Crisis Group, a conflict monitoring think-tank headquartered in Brussels, notes that a resolution to Kenya's underlying social and economic inequalities must also be found to prevent a recurrence of conflict. "Kenya," he points out, "is the platform for relief operations in Somalia and Sudan, a regional entrepot for trade and investment and a key anchor for the long-term stabilization of Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi."

Reuters / Zohra Bensemra

One of more than 350,000 Kenyans displaced by the fighting that erupted after a disputed election in December. The crisis has inflicted a heavy toll both within the country and beyond its borders.

Transportation hub

Briefing the UN Security Council in February, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes noted the regional impact of Kenya's crisis has been particularly significant because of the country's long-standing role as East Africa's main transportation hub.

More than 80 per cent of Uganda's imports pass through the port of Mombasa, as do almost all of Rwanda's exports. Commercial trade and humanitarian assistance to Burundi, the eastern DRC, parts of northern Tanzania and southern Sudan also rely on the port. These countries are therefore "at risk of being significantly affected by violence and disruption" in Kenya, Mr. Holmes said.

For a region that has been working hard towards economic integration, the disruptions of trade and business have been severe. Most commodities going through the port also must travel along the Northern Corridor, a network of highways through Kenya to neighbouring countries. Each day some 4,000 light vehicles, 1,250 trucks and 400 buses carry more than 10 mn tonnes of cargo to Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi along the network. However, in January and early February, an estimated 40 illegal roadblocks barred the way.

To open up the route, the Kenya army in February began providing security for vehicles travelling in convoy. But convoys are slow and costs multiplied. The UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that fuel costs in Uganda, eastern DRC and Burundi rose by up to 50 per cent. The price of petrol products in Kigali, Rwanda more than doubled, and severe shortages prompted the government to institute fuel rationing.

According to the Uganda Manufacturers Association, food prices went up about 15 per cent, and in January inflation rose to 6.5 per cent from 5.1 per cent the month before. By mid-February manufacturers had lost $43 mn because of delays, destruction of goods and slowed production. The Uganda Revenue Authority reported daily revenue

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Safeguarding children from armed conflict

Progress in a few countries, but victimization still widespread

By Ernest Harsch

For several years after war erupted in Côte d'Ivoire in 2002, children were recruited to fight on all sides of the conflict. But with the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement last year, such recruitment has essentially ceased, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon reported to the Security Council at the end of January. Because children are no longer being conscripted, the Ivorian groups that were previously cited by name in the annexes to the Secretary-General's annual reports on children in armed conflict have now been "delisted."

Sierra Leone and Liberia used to have large numbers of child soldiers. But they are now at peace and are also no longer included in the report's annexes. The Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Radhika Coomaraswamy calls the annexes a "list of shame," intended to put pressure on named groups to stop such abuses.

There has been modest progress in a few other African countries. A peace accord in January between the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and rebel factions in the provinces of North and South Kivu called for the demobilization of child combatants. "Each month we are welcoming some 200 child soldiers who are leaving the armed groups," reports Ntumba Luaba, national coordinator of the DRC's disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme.

However, notes the Secretary-General, all the Congolese groups listed in his previous reports "continue to recruit, use and abduct children," and therefore remain in the annexes. These include the force of rebel General Laurent Nkunda, which increased its enlistment of child soldiers during the reporting period, as well as the government's regular armed forces. And while the number of incidents leading to the killing and maiming of children declined in the DRC, many continued to suffer sexual abuse. In South Kivu alone, some 1,400 child victims of rape and other sexual violence received assistance from the UN and its partners in the one-year period ending June 2007.

Close scrutiny

While the impact of armed conflict on children had been recognized for some time as a major humanitarian problem, in the 1990s it also came to be seen as a peace and security question. In 1999, the UN Security Council began taking up the issue as a regular thematic item. Demobilizing child soldiers has become a normal feature of UN-organized DDR operations, and a number of UN agencies and civil society groups now systematically monitor the conditions of children in war zones.

Some of those who recruit child soldiers have been brought to justice. The Special Court for Sierra Leone has convicted several former commanders and the charge of conscripting children also has been laid against the court's most prominent defendant, former Liberian President Charles Taylor. The International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague has indicted or issued warrants against rebel leaders in the DRC and Uganda, and Congolese courts have also prosecuted a number of individuals on similar charges.

"The fight against impunity through accountability for perpetrators of grave violations against children is crucial to halt these unacceptable acts," argues Ms. Coomaraswamy.

Extensive abuses

Despite stronger action, abuses remain widespread. The number of child combatants ranges between 250,000 and 300,000 worldwide. The Secretary-General's report draws particular attention to the vulnerability to recruitment of children in camps for internally displaced people, citing cases from Chad, the DRC, Sudan and Uganda.

The report details various kinds of mistreatment in a number of countries:

- Although most armed groups in **Burundi** have signed peace agreements, some continue to recruit child soldiers. Rape and other sexual violence against children by both rebels and government forces have been reported.
- In the **Central African Republic** several rebel forces have been conscripting children and sending them into combat, resulting in many deaths. However, an agreement involving one of the groups, the government and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) led to the release of 450 children.
- Both the government and rebels in **Chad** have conscripted hundreds of child soldiers. Armed groups from Darfur in neighbouring Sudan that are backed by the Chadian government have also recruited children from refugee camps in Chad.
- In **Sudan** itself, all sides in the Darfur conflict use and abuse children. Child recruitment by former rebels in the south has continued, despite a peace accord. After a peace agreement in

Reuters / Stephanie Hancock

A boy soldier in the Chadian army: Both sides in the conflict have recruited children to fight, contrary to international norms.

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Better health at the click of a button

Information technology helps Rwandan clinics reach out

By **Mary Kimani**
Kigali

The small, dusty village of Mayange lies 20 kilometres from Rwanda's capital, Kigali. Its health centre has fewer than 40 beds but serves an estimated 35,000 people. The Mayange centre could well be like thousands of other health facilities across the continent struggling to meet patients' needs with very few resources and staff.

But thanks to an innovative partnership involving the government, non-governmental organizations and private companies, the Mayange centre is now able to use mobile telephones to provide better treatment. With software developed by Ericsson and phones donated by the Rwandan subsidiary of Mobile Telephone Networks (MTN), a South African firm, health workers can call up the medical records of pregnant women from an online database and then, by cell phone, tell caregivers what to do during an emergency. The memory of each phone donated by MTN includes a maternal and child-care training manual, with images and audio directions that can be sent to mothers and families.

The project, although only a few months old, is "going to have a very big impact," Dr. Joseph Ryarasa told *Africa Renewal*. "To reduce maternal and child mortality, you need to educate mothers and health workers. Now we can send them educative messages on their phones or inform them about inoculations."

With funding from the Rwandan government and support from the Earth Institute of Columbia University in New York, the Mayange health centre has a solar charger, provided by Ericsson, to power 30 phones. It also has a computer database, accessible by mobile phone, with medical records of families in the village, making it easy for health workers to monitor health patterns.

Easy to adapt

Ericsson Chief Executive Officer Carl-Henric Svanberg says that replicating the project elsewhere in Africa would be easy and inexpensive. "Different places will want to apply the software to different things — health care, agriculture or to check the prices in the fish market," he told *Africa Renewal*. "Customizing the software is not rocket science. African software engineers can do it easily." As a start, the Earth Institute and Ericsson intend to extend the project to 10 other villages in Africa.

Such information and communications technologies (ICTs) are an important means by which Africa can address its social challenges, says Joanna Rubenstein, a director at the Earth Institute. "Initially we thought we had to wait until we got electricity to such places to be able to bring in such technology," she told *Africa Renewal*. "But with solar panels it's possible immediately." That breakthrough has opened the way for "applications that we in developed countries don't normally use mobile phones for."

Monitoring AIDS treatments

The Mayange clinic is not alone in using mobile networks to improve health care. Across Rwanda, 143 public and private health centres that offer anti-retroviral medicines (ARVs) to people with HIV/AIDS now use Tracnet, a system that employs mobile phones to collect information on patients' infections. It helps the national drug centre keep track of which medicines are available in each health centre and when to resupply, making shortages of ARVs less common.

"It is a simple technology which has changed the way we deal with HIV in Rwanda," says Dr. Tom Mushi, at Kigali's Polyclinic of Hope. Previously, small clinics would often run out of essential medicines and other supplies. The time it then took to restock could disrupt the centres' ability to fill prescriptions. "Now if the national drug supply can't send the drugs quickly enough to a centre, they can talk to a health centre nearby that has a high stock and have the need filled," he told *Africa Renewal*.

Alamy Images / Tetra Images

Medical records and other health information can now be easily shared via mobile phones and other modern communications technologies.

Tracnet is a joint project of Voxiva, a private company, and the Rwandan Ministry of Health, and is partially funded by the World Bank. Similar partnerships among governments, private companies and UN agencies are operating in Uganda and Mozambique. In Burkina Faso and Burundi rural communities are being trained in caring for HIV/AIDS patients via mobile technologies.

Rwanda's Minister of State, Energy and Communications Albert Butare urges donors to support technological solutions that can help solve social problems. "When we embarked on adopting ICTs, we actually had problems with our development partners," he explains. "They told us, 'You are too ambitious. Do you really need computers and the Internet or sufficient drinking water, good shelter and food?' We said, '[They are] not exclusive. We need all of them'." ■

Enlisting men for women's equality

South African initiatives against sexual violence, gender inequities

By ***Stephanie Urdang***
Johannesburg

When an older man raised his hand to speak on the third day of a gender workshop in Hoedspruit, a rural community in northern South Africa, Bafana Khumalo's heart sank. As the facilitator of the workshop, which specifically targeted men, he had already touched on concepts of manhood and how gender inequality contributed to the sky-rocketing HIV rates in South Africa.

iAfrika Photos / Eric Miller

South African civil society groups are seeking to change men's attitudes towards women, and to actively mobilize them in fighting violence against women.

Mr. Khumalo worried that the participant would deliver a lecture on how equality between men and women is contrary to African culture or how women's empowerment is dividing families. Older men are deeply respected in rural communities, and he knew this man had the ability to derail the workshop.

"Yesterday, after I got home," the participant began, "I called my sons, I called my wife, and I explained to them what we are doing in this workshop." He told his children that things had to change in their home. No longer could their mother arrive home tired from a day of work and be expected to cook, clean, wash the dishes and clear up all on her own. It was simply unfair.

From now on, he told his children, they would have to contribute to household chores. "You have to start cleaning and tidying the house. You have to begin preparing dinner, so when your mother comes home she can see that we have all contributed. I can't learn to cook — I am too old. But I am prepared to wash the dishes."

For Mr. Khumalo, it was a significant moment. This participant had accepted one of the main messages of the workshop: that the idea of what it means to be a man is not innate, but shaped by society, and can therefore be changed. As Mr. Khumalo points out, social conventions equate manhood "with dominance and aggression, with sexual conquest and fearlessness." Social norms also determine the roles that men and women play. To change those relations, all aspects of gender inequality must be addressed.

"I look back at this moment," he told *Africa Renewal*, "and I realize we are getting somewhere. This story is repeated again and again in every area that we have established our programme."

Across South Africa, such workshops are beginning to change attitudes. Research by the South African Men as Partners (MAP) network shows that 71 per cent of men participating in such workshops believe that women should have the same rights as men, compared with only 25 per cent more generally. Asked whether they thought it was normal to sometimes beat their wives, 82 per cent of workshop participants said it was not, while 38 per cent of non-participants thought wife-beating was normal.

'Need to be different men'

Mr. Khumalo is co-director of Sonke Gender Justice, a non-governmental organization formed in 2006. It tackles two major issues in South Africa: violence against women and very high HIV-transmission rates. He was an activist in the anti-apartheid struggle, and after apartheid ended he began working with the Lutheran Church in various capacities, including as a pastor. His true calling, he realized, was to work with men to help end violence against women. He developed workshops and often ran them with Sonke co-director and co-founder Dean Peacock, who returned to South Africa after more than a decade's work in the men's movement in the US.

Mr. Khumalo was struck, he says, by how "hungry" men in his workshops were to discuss violence against women and their role in that violence. "They expressed a heartfelt need to be different men, different fathers from the older generation of men."

Mr. Khumalo and Mr. Peacock strongly believe that gender equality cannot be achieved through focusing on women's empowerment alone. They also believe that men's behaviour and attitudes are driving both the HIV epidemic and violence against women.

"Men's violence against women is not simply a result of men losing their tempers or because they lack control," Mr. Peacock told *Africa Renewal*. "They have been brought up to believe and internalize a view of manhood that is equated with aggression, dominance over women and sexual conquest. Men often fear that they will be dismissed by their friends and their community as not 'real' men. They will be regarded as 'weak' if they apologize, compromise or share power. Rather than seeking ways to resolve conflict, they resort to violence — not only against women, but against each other."

Rape, violence and HIV

According to numerous studies, South Africa has the highest incidence of reported

rape in any country. In 2006 the South African Medical Research Council (MRC) surveyed 1,370 male volunteers from 70 rural villages. It found that close to one in four of the men surveyed had participated in sexual violence. Of the total, 16.3 per cent had raped a non-partner or had participated in gang rape, while 8.4 per cent had been sexually violent towards an intimate partner.

Other studies have shown that the first sexual experience for many adolescents and young women is unwanted. According to research by the Witwatersrand University published in 2004, almost one-third of sexually experienced women report that their first sexual encounter was not consensual. That same year, the MRC reported that one woman is killed every six hours by an intimate partner in South Africa — the highest substantiated rate anywhere in the world.

Also in 2004, South African researchers reported in the respected *Lancet* medical journal that women with violent or controlling male partners are more vulnerable to HIV infection. The study postulated that abusive men are more likely to have HIV and to impose risky sexual practices on their partners.

Violence against women is not unique to South Africa, of course. Worldwide, one woman in three experiences domestic violence.

Beyond women's empowerment

With the end of apartheid in 1994, the new government made achieving gender equality a central goal. The 1996 constitution broke ground internationally with its attention to the protection and promotion of women's rights and gender equality. Besides affirming the right of everyone to be equal before the law and to have the equal protection and benefit of the law, it established a Commission on Gender Equality to promote democracy and human rights for both men and women.

Some six years later, one of the commission members, Sheila Meintjes, observed: "There's a realization that if we don't bring men in as partners, we won't win the battle." That view guides activists' current work with men.

Mr. Khumalo and his colleagues at Sonke believe that existing progress towards gender equality will be derailed unless men also begin to change. "The attitudes of men and the concept of masculinity are linked to our patriarchal heritage," Mr. Khumalo says. "In the course of our work during the 13 years of our democracy, we learned a lesson. While a lot of emphasis was placed on the need to transform gender relations between men and women, the major focus was on women's empowerment." That focus on the oppression of women made some men feel left out.

UAfrika Photos / Eric Miller

A South African woman whose daughter was raped and died of AIDS.

While work on women's empowerment remains necessary, Mr. Khumalo adds, he also points to an unfortunate trend. "If a woman is living in an abusive relationship," he explains, "then to empower her with awareness of her rights . . . is not always a wise thing. Women return from workshops with new clarity, wanting to assert their rights. The result? The men begin to regard themselves as the victims. Fearing the unknown, they become even more violent towards their partners."

Risks of violence for men

It therefore is important, he continues, to show men that reducing the power men exert over women has benefits for men as well. "It makes us much less susceptible to using power in the negative sense."

Violence is not only dangerous for women. It has a damaging impact on men themselves. The South African National Injury Mortality Surveillance System reported in 2003 that roughly six times as many men as women died as a result of homicide in South Africa (7,359 men and 1,197 women).

Mr. Peacock argues that this too is a form of gender-based violence. "It is not just about men being violent towards women. It is also about man-on-man violence, another way of asserting male dominance. If men can understand that they themselves are dying in large numbers because of this violence, then it provides them with an imperative to explore alternative, more peaceful ways of expressing their masculinity."

There are other ways in which men's perceptions of masculinity adversely affect their lives. Mike Matyeni, an organizer for Sonke Gender Justice who is open about his HIV-positive status and was previously active in both the Treatment Action Campaign and Men as Partners, cites the links between cultural attitudes and HIV transmission. Many men's perceptions of manhood, he told *Africa Renewal*, often lead them to refuse to use condoms. Condom use, they feel, diminishes their sexuality and their view of themselves as men.

Also, some argue that because they have paid a bride price when they married, their wives have no right to tell them what to do. Men also resist going to clinics to be tested or for treatment, believing that would indicate "weakness" and leave them open to taunts from their friends. Many therefore seek out the services of traditional healers instead. Moreover, many medical practitioners in the clinics are women, and men may feel it demeaning or embarrassing to be treated by women. So they

do not go even if they suspect they are HIV-positive or are sick.

'One man can'

The first work focusing on men began in collaboration with women in women's organizations. Agisanang Domestic Abuse Prevention and Training (ADAPT), for instance, developed a men's programme to educate men about domestic violence. This included improvisational skits in township taverns and men's marches, one of which was attended by then President Nelson Mandela. Over the years, men's groups began forming to specifically address men's roles, responsibilities, attitudes and behaviour.

PictureNet / Shaun Harris

Men protest violence against women in Johannesburg, South Africa. Banner reads: "Protect our women and children."

This spurred a wider response. Government departments began different campaigns. Civil society organizations arose, including Fathers Speak Out, the Men as Partners network and the South African Men's Forum. Trade union federations and faith-based groups also developed programmes on gender equality and HIV. Their activities include holding training workshops, staging dramas, promoting discussions in informal taverns, painting murals that highlight the issues and undertaking other initiatives that involve community members.

Sonke Gender Justice is trying to move beyond workshops and small events to engage men — and women — in broader activism and campaigns. The goal is to enlist many more organizations and communities and to develop a national response. Sonke's One Man Can campaign is one reflection of the broadened approach.

Funded by diverse donors such as UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration, private foundations and South African government departments, the One Man Can campaign is being implemented in all nine of South Africa's provinces, and is gradually being taken up in neighbouring countries. Its goal is to encourage men and boys to take action to end domestic and sexual violence and to promote healthy, equitable and mutually respectful relationships. By mobilizing civil society, the campaign promotes change within families and communities and advocates a stronger governmental response.

Getting off the sidelines

"We want men to be able to speak out and take a stand, not watch from the sidelines and do nothing," explains Mr. Khumalo. If a man sees a woman who has been beaten by a boyfriend or husband or hears screams from the other side of a closed door, he needs to act responsibly. "Women are afraid of us. They are afraid to hear footsteps behind them in the night. We have to show them that we care and that we will no longer accept the negative behaviour of men towards them."

An underlying message of the campaign is that men can love passionately, respectfully and sensitively. The complex and diverse messages of the campaign go beyond statements of intention to suggestions about how to build trust between partners and with women in general. They promote awareness of how violence undermines women's ability to fully and safely function. Developing clear communication between men and women, whatever their relationship, is key to building respect. Only then can men appreciate that "no means no," that using condoms is important, that justice and rights are necessary at both the personal and national levels and that the government needs to do more to meet its constitutional obligations.

In appealing to men to get directly involved in ending violence against women, the campaign also urges them to stand up for their principles — and to not let friends pressure them into disrespecting and degrading women. It is up to men to break the cycle of violence.

Educating friends — and women

Men who have changed their attitudes and become active often speak about the constraints of their upbringing. Zithulele Dlakavu, an organizer for One Man Can and an actor, writer and director of educational plays, recalls that his best friend was hostile to his work with men. They had been close since adolescence, but his friend could not understand why Mr. Dlakavu had changed so radically. "You are not a man!" his friend told him.

Meanwhile, Mr. Dlakavu was disturbed that his friend beat his girlfriend. Mr. Dlakavu intervened to educate his friend. His persistence paid off. His friend no longer beats his girlfriend.

Male activists have found that it is not only other men who need to change. Wives and girlfriends often deride men who offer to share household responsibilities or make decisions together. In a discussion three years ago in Soweto, a township outside Johannesburg, a group of organizers spoke of the reactions of women to their work. One had come home from a workshop, cleaned the house and prepared the dinner. His girlfriend thought he was silently chastising her for not looking after him or the house well enough. Another was castigated by his wife when he asked her to

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Gender violence hampers AIDS fight

Activists in Zambia fight a 'deadly link'

By **Reginald Ntomba**
Lusaka

Maria is living with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Antiretroviral medicines (ARVs) are now more widely available and are supposed to make her life better. But her continued therapy is under threat because she fears that if her husband discovers her HIV status he will become verbally abusive or even divorce her. As a result, Maria says, she has had to hide her life-prolonging ARV drugs and only takes them when her husband is not around. Because she hides her tablets, she has sometimes forgotten to take them.

According to the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), there are 33.2 million people worldwide living with HIV. Of those, 15.4 million are women. In Africa, women account for between 59 and 61 per cent of all adults living with HIV. Gender violence is one factor that makes women more vulnerable to infection, and it also hampers treatment.

Maria's tale is one of the many cases documented by Human Rights Watch (HRW) in two of Zambia's nine provinces. The international non-governmental organization (NGO), headquartered in New York, warns that if gender violence is not addressed, the government's comprehensive programme to provide free ARVs through the public health system will be frustrated. By the end of 2007, reports Finance and National Planning Minister Ng'andu Magande, 137,000 people were receiving antiretroviral therapy, up from 75,000 in 2006.

"Unless the Zambian government introduces legal and health-system reforms and removes the barriers to HIV treatment that women face," says Nada Ali, author of the HRW report, "gender-based abuses will continue to shatter the lives of countless Zambian women in acute need of antiretroviral treatments and contribute to avoidable losses of health and lives."

A human rights violation

According to the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), "Violence against women is one of the most widespread violations of human rights." In November 2007 UNIFEM launched a "Say No to Violence Against Women" campaign.

Activists in Southern Africa are now drawing attention to the contribution of gender violence to other ills, such as the AIDS pandemic. Says Malawian women's rights activist Tiseke Kasambala, there is a "deadly link" between abuses of women's rights and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The Zambian chapter of Women and the Law in Southern Africa (WLSA), a research and advocacy group, argues that unless such violence is addressed, combating HIV/AIDS will be an even more arduous task. "Violence against women has affected treatment of HIV/AIDS and this is worrying," says Mrs. Matrine Chuulu, the chapter's national coordinator.

Panos / Pep Bonet

Two HIV-positive girls in Zambia, one of whom had been raped. Fear of violence keeps many HIV-positive women from seeking treatment.

NGOs are leading the fight against gender violence by lobbying the government to strengthen legislation and by providing various services to abused women. The Zambian chapter of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), with funding from the European Union, runs a crisis centre for battered women and provides such services as psychotherapy and legal advice. According to data collected by the YWCA, in the 874 cases of gender violence reported since 2006, nearly half of the women (427) were found to be HIV-positive.

Strengthening laws

Currently Zambia does not have legislation criminalizing gender violence, but the government is moving in that direction. In 2005 it amended the penal code to prohibit indecent assault, sexual harassment and trafficking of women and children. President Levy Mwanawasa notes that despite such efforts to strengthen the law, "the scourge of gender violence has continued in our homes and communities."

In a state of the nation address to parliament in early January, President Mwanawasa said that the government would soon introduce "a bill specifically dealing with gender violence." The government, he added, will also speed up efforts to incorporate the goals of the international Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) into national law.

It is time to "move the agenda from talking to action," says the UN Secretary-General's special envoy on HIV/AIDS in Africa, Elizabeth Mataka. It is especially important to make people aware of the need to tackle gender violence. Police and laws, by themselves, will not solve the problem, she adds. It is also vital to mobilize society and "carry the community along." ■

Women struggle to secure land rights

Hard fight for access and decision-making power

By **Mary Kimani**

Felitus Kures is a widow living in Kapchorwa, northeastern Uganda. Her husband's death left her solely responsible for their children. To meet their needs, she depended on the small piece of land she and her husband had farmed together. But just months after his funeral, her in-laws sold her husband's land without her knowledge. "We only realized this when the buyer came to evict us," Ms. Kures explains. She was able to regain use of the land after she got legal assistance with the help of the Uganda Land Alliance, a civil society group that campaigns for land rights.

Panos / Giacomo Pirozzi

A women's farming cooperative in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Across Africa, women grow most of the food but rarely have secure rights to land in their own names.

Ms. Kures's plight is a common one in Africa, although she was more fortunate than most other women. Many never regain access or rights to matrimonial land lost after divorce or the death of a spouse.

Experts report that women in Africa contribute 70 per cent of food production. They also account for nearly half of all farm labour, and 80–90 per cent of food processing, storage and transport, as well as hoeing and weeding.

Yet women often lack rights to land, notes Joan Kagwanja, a food security and sustainable development officer at the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), headquartered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Land rights tend to be held by men or kinship groups controlled by men, and women have access mainly through a male relative, usually a father or husband. Even then, women are routinely obliged to hand over the proceeds of any farm sales to a male and have little say over how those earnings are used.

Moreover, such limited access is very tenuous and can be quickly lost. One study showed that in Zambia more than one third of widows lost access to family land when their husbands died. "It is this dependency on men that leaves many African women vulnerable," Ms. Kagwanja told *Africa Renewal*.

In response, activists are fighting to introduce or strengthen laws intended to give women more secure access to land and are combating social norms and practices that stand in their way. Despite many obstacles, they are making headway here and there.

AIDS impact

The spread of HIV/AIDS and the stigma associated with the disease have only made women's land rights more precarious. Widows of men who die from the disease have often been accused of bringing the malady into the family, possibly leading to the confiscation of their land and other property.

As a result, they and their children are frequently forced to survive on society's margins. "They often lose access to land, and [must] get by selling food on the street," says Kaori Izumi, an HIV and rural development officer at the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). "They have no place to sleep. This creates problems of food security."

Such women sometimes lose custody of their children, end up going into sex work or become squatters. And because they are unable to provide for themselves, they become more vulnerable to violence and other abuse. FAO has documented such cases since 2001, adds Ms. Izumi, supporting work on one of the priority issues taken up by the UN Secretary-General's Task Force for Women, Girls and AIDS.

The quality of women's lives can be improved by according them more decision-making power over land, FAO has found. "In Botswana and Swaziland," Ms. Izumi told *Africa Renewal*, "we found that sexual commerce and other risky behaviour declines dramatically when women have secure assets and property rights. Land and property rights are therefore vital to sexual equality and food security."

Unfortunately, after decades of work, land rights campaigners and UN agencies have scarcely improved women's land rights, notes Ms. Izumi. "We need to take stock of what we know, what has worked, didn't work and why, and come up with a clear road map to secure women's land and property rights."

A widow and her children in Ethiopia: Unlike most widows in Africa, she has been able to retain control over her small farm.

Panos / Jan Hammond

Historical legacy

Researchers with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), based in Washington, DC, note that the marginal nature of women's land rights is an historical problem in Africa. Before colonial rule, land ownership and access took diverse forms but were largely vested in lineages, clans and families, with male leaders exercising day-to-day control. Members of a particular lineage or clan would seek rights to use land from those community or family leaders.

Except in a few communities where inheritance passed through the mother, land rights were typically only inherited by sons. Women rarely had full rights to land. They were seen as secondary claimants, through male relatives. Before getting married, a woman might have access to her father's land. But in many communities she lost that right with marriage, on the assumption that she would then gain access to the land of her husband or of his family. When a husband died, his land passed on to any sons they might have had or to male in-laws if there were none.

Benjamin Cousins, a researcher for IFPRI, points out that although historically women did not have direct rights over land, they had traditional protections that ensured continued access even after separation, divorce or widowhood. There also were traditional means of arbitration to which women could appeal if access to land was contested.

But the advent of colonial rule led to the introduction of Western systems of land tenure. In East and Southern Africa, the high number of white settlers encouraged the privatization and subdivision of land, held under individual freehold titles. In West Africa much land was left under communal forms of ownership, managed by customary leaders.

At independence, some new governments, as in Tanzania, Mozambique and Benin, proclaimed state ownership over all land. In Kenya and South Africa private ownership existed alongside lineage or clan ownership. In Nigeria, clan and lineage ownership coexisted with both state and private ownership, especially in urban areas.

Over the years, rapid population growth has contributed to the overuse of land and to the depletion of soils. This has made fertile land more valuable and increased competition for its control. Such pressures, together with changes in family structures and clan relations, have eroded traditional social safeguards that ensured some access by women to land. So while many land disputes in Africa are still formally governed by customary law, notes Mr. Cousins, "many protections of women have not been accurately carried forward" into modern life. Moreover, he told *Africa Renewal*, today there are many situations, such as cohabitation without marriage, to which traditional norms do not apply. Consequently, "Many women have lost access to land."

Dual systems

Many African countries today recognize both "traditional" rules of land ownership and Western-type statutory laws. In Nigeria, the state assumed ownership of all land after independence in 1960. Although this weakened customary land tenure, traditional laws still were recognized by the government in areas of long-established clan and lineage ownership. The recognition of Islamic law in Nigeria's northern states complicated the situation further.

In southwestern Nigeria, notes IFPRI, confusion about which rules to follow enabled rich elites to collude with tribal chiefs to buy up land, which formally belonged to the kinship group, without anyone, especially women, being able to stop it.

Such dual systems of Western and traditional or religious law have often disadvantaged women. A joint study by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and World Bank in 2000 on gender and agriculture in Africa cited the example of Kenya's Succession Act. The law stipulates that both men and women have equal rights to inheritance. But it also states that if the man dies without a will, the customary law of his group relating to land inheritance will prevail. Since few men write wills and most Kenyan communities do not allow a woman to inherit property from her husband or father, the equality provisions of the Succession Act generally do not apply. In reality, the study argues, inheritance rights for women do not exist.

Land titling

One solution that Western development experts initially promoted to overcome the shortcomings of customary law was

to give land titles to individuals. Esther Mwangi, a land rights researcher at Harvard University, notes that governments in East and Southern Africa followed the course of land titling, in an effort to ensure that individuals had legal power over their land. This policy was expected to help women secure legal rights to properties that they owned or inherited.

"In the areas where I have been working, the privatization process has actually stripped women of their access," Ms. Mwangi told *Africa Renewal*. During titling operations, it was mainly men who got their names on the documents because they were deemed to be the "household heads." Widows lucky enough to get land were allocated the smallest lots.

The number of polygamous households across Africa has complicated things further. Often senior and junior wives, their children and several sets of in-laws compete for access. "As the legal land title holder, the man can do whatever he wants with the land," explains Ms. Mwangi. "Some just sell the land without informing their wives."

Land rights activists suggest that one way to give women guaranteed access to land is to separate formal ownership of land from the ability to use it. Thus, while the land may be registered in the name of a man, he would be barred from selling it without the consent of his wife or wives or other heirs. Ghana has a "head of family accountability law" that is intended to ensure that family property cannot be sold without others being informed, giving consent or benefiting from the proceeds.

"Another alternative would be for land to be put in the name of families or both men and women to have their names on the certificate," suggests Ms. Mwangi. "Where resources such as water, sanitation and grazing land have to be shared communally, then whole communities could be identified as owners of the land, with everyone having equal access."

Panos / Crispin Hughes

Marthe Nzabakurana, a member of a women farmers' association in Rwanda: The government has passed a law giving women equal rights to those of men in inheriting land and other property, overturning traditional norms that favoured males.

Resistance to legal reform

But such ideas may be easier proposed than implemented. First of all, they require changes in the law. Activists for women's land rights have tried to have laws passed in many countries, with mixed results, notes Ms. Izumi. In Uganda, where there was very active lobbying by the Uganda Land Alliance for both men and women to be listed in title deeds as co-owners, the bill came to parliament repeatedly and failed each time. In part, explains Ms. Izumi, there was resistance by the private sector.

In Tanzania, where land is owned by the state but assigned on the basis of long-term leases (usually lasting 99 years), businesses argued that collective ownership would make it hard to use land as collateral for bank loans or as a source of income. "They argue that if buyers have to get consent from family members before land can be sold or utilized in a certain way, it will be very difficult. It doesn't facilitate the land market," says Ms. Izumi.

That argument, Ms. Izumi notes, overlooks the fact that women often do not benefit from such private land transactions or use land as collateral. That is because they generally do not control financial resources in the family and cannot afford to buy land. Even when they do, they still have difficulties getting credit, because in many countries they need the consent of their husbands to apply for loans.

Where progressive laws have passed, things do not necessarily get easier. In Mozambique, civil society groups gained a law in 1997 entitling women to secure access to land and property. "We saw the land law as a victory," Lorena Magane of the Rural Association of Mutual Support told a reporter.

But Rachael Waterhouse, an editor of a report on gender and land in Mozambique, says that while the law was fine in theory, implementation proved difficult because traditional courts, which most rural women use, still consider the man the head of household and therefore the rightful authority over land.

Similarly, in Zimbabwe, the government amended the inheritance law to make the surviving spouse, whether male or female, the legitimate heir. But, says Ms. Izumi, "lack of information means many women in rural areas are not aware of it."

In Ghana the 1985 Intestate Succession Law and the Head of Household Accountability Law were both intended to create greater security for widows and children. If a man died without a will, the succession law decreed that his property would be

equally divided and distributed among his widow, children and other members of the extended family. Yet an FAO study in Ghana's Upper Volta Region found that few women knew of either law and that customary practices continued to determine inheritance. This left many women without access to land after the death of their partner.

In general, acknowledges Ms. Izumi, "progressive laws in Africa suffer from lack of appropriate implementation. In countries where lobbies are trying to get governments to pass progressive laws, there is still a lot of resistance."

Multiple avenues of change

What women need, argues Ms. Kagwanja, is for their basic rights to be entrenched in constitutions and for equal rights of property ownership to be clearly stipulated in the law. Where this has already been done, it is necessary to bring all inheritance and land laws into harmony with the constitution, so that they say the same thing. In addition, legal institutions responsible for implementing the land laws need to operate equitably, be friendly to women and operate not only in the cities.

"At present," she says, "we have very centralized institutions. Moreover, it is men who are in charge of the dispute-resolution systems and the court systems are very expensive and intimidating."

Traditional land ownership systems in particular need some rethinking, she says. Local chiefs authorized to allocate land generally assign it to men. "How do you democratize the systems for allocation of land?" Ms. Kagwanja asks. "Do you develop new localized land boards, where you elect members of the land board and insist on a requirement for gender equity, as is the case in Tanzania and Uganda? Or do you democratize the old system? These are some of the questions we need to answer."

Answering such questions, suggests Ms. Izumi, requires pursuing multiple efforts simultaneously. "So much effort has been put into legal reform. Laws and policies are important and we should continue trying to change them and make those changes happen. However, we also need to assist governments to improve their technical and financial capacity to implement the laws."

Judicial and traditional leaders also need training, she adds, to help the wider community accept women's rights to land. Community tribunals could then be set up to arbitrate such issues. The most important thing, Ms. Izumi adds, is to sensitize women "on their own rights, and what they could do or where they could go to get help."

Activists are fighting to introduce or strengthen laws intended to give women more secure access to land and are combating social norms and practices that stand in their way.

Combating negative norms

Broader cultural change is also vital, says Ms. Mwangi. Those who decide land allocations have particular cultural understandings of the role of women in society. So wider gender disparities in economic and political power also need to be addressed.

She spent some time talking to men and women about sharing land ownership. "I think that the men are not ready," observes Ms. Mwangi. "They don't seem very sensitized to the idea that women can be decision-makers when it pertains to land." That is a paradox, she adds. "Women's labour is key to productivity, yet that land is literally out of reach for women. Males do not seem to see a problem with this."

Mr. Cousins agrees. "To address land rights, you need to address the unequal power relations within families. Unless you change the power relations, the legal definition of who has rights may not make much of a difference," he told *Africa Renewal*.

"We have seen a lot of resistance," says Ms. Izumi. "These norms are very deep. Gender relations are the most difficult social relations to change."

Positive developments

But there are some positive achievements. In Swaziland, women cannot own land because they are considered minors under the law. Yet some HIV-positive women who lost access to land after their husbands died were able to negotiate with a female chief to persuade other chiefs to give the widows land they could use to secure their livelihood. They got 13 collective farming plots in different areas, Ms. Izumi reports.

In Kenya, community watchdog organizations and other groups providing home-based care for those living with HIV/AIDS are intervening. When they encounter property grabbing, they negotiate, mostly with male members of the family, for women and girls to retain access to the land and property.

In Rwanda, the government passed a law in 1999 giving women inheritance rights equal to those of males, overruling traditional norms by which only male children could inherit. This has enabled widows and female orphans of the 1994 genocide to secure land.

In Ghana, reports IFPRI, cocoa production is changing land relations. Growing the plants is labour-intensive, and increasingly men and women are negotiating exchanges of labour for land. Under the process, which is called "gifting," the married woman is given a piece of land as payment for her work. The community recognizes the gift as an irrevocable exchange of land for labour, and the woman continues to own it even in the event of separation.

Currently, UN agencies such as FAO, the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and UNDP are working with non-governmental organizations to raise awareness among women of their rights and to support efforts to entrench equality of access in national laws.

But Ms. Izumi argues that more must be done. "Small initiatives must be scaled up. What one small group can do is limited. What we have been doing is disseminating information on what others have done and asking groups to try it out. Such work should be supported. There is growing awareness of the issue, and there is reason to remain optimistic." ■

Spurring business to invest in Africa's future

NEPAD encourages African private sector engagement

By **Efam Dovi**

Since the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement in March 2007, Côte d'Ivoire has been healing the wounds of a civil war that divided the country for more than four years. Major challenges remain in reconciling different political and ethnic groups and in reviving the confidence of a vibrant business sector that once made the country one of West Africa's economic powerhouses.

Panos / Sven Torfinn

Loading cocoa at Côte d'Ivoire's port of Abidjan: Members of the country's NEPAD Business Group are working with the government to help promote economic recovery in the wake of the civil war.

Local business leaders believe that the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), adopted by African leaders in 2001 as the continent's comprehensive plan for economic, social and political advancement, has a key role to play in helping to mobilize the private sector for Côte d'Ivoire's recovery. The NEPAD Business Group in Côte d'Ivoire, set up a few months before the peace agreement, has been in "constant dialogue" with the government to "set up building blocks for a post-crisis plan," says its president, Guy M'Bengue, who also heads the country's export promotion agency.

In fact, Mr. M'Bengue told *Africa Renewal*, the Ivorian private sector managed to minimize the damage of the war by keeping intact the country's industrial base, "despite the difficult times over the last five years." But if renewed investment is to be encouraged, business confidence must be restored.

The NEPAD Business Group, now with more than 100 members, has been urging the government to undertake legal, tax and customs reforms. So far the authorities have reduced the value-added tax and begun paying off public debts owed to private businesses, measures that have helped "to create trust between the government and the private sector," says Mr. M'Bengue.

The Ivorian group also joined with the government to organize a forum for businesses to learn about NEPAD-sponsored infrastructure development projects that are being financed by the African Development Bank (ADB). The group expects further dialogue with the government in developing more incentives for the private sector, as part of a broad plan for post-conflict recovery.

Reforms under way

Whether involved in post-war reconstruction or not, many countries across Africa are carrying out reforms to create a "sound and conducive environment for private sector activities," as specified by NEPAD.

Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire's immediate neighbour to the east, is overhauling its public sector to encourage efficiency and provide more incentives for private business. The port authority's operations have been streamlined to speed the clearing of goods, and all major ports and harbours have been linked on a computer network with relevant government departments and agencies to simplify the processing of imports. Reforms at the agency that registers companies have cut the time needed to start a business from several months to 42 days.

"We have adopted a pro-business stance aimed at achieving widespread private sector–led growth throughout the country," John-Hawkins Asiedu, a director at Ghana's Ministry of Trade, Industry and Private Sector Development, told *Africa Renewal*.

South African Minister of Trade and Industry Mandisi

Mpahlwa told a NEPAD projects conference in South Africa in November that the increase in economic growth in many African countries in recent years can be attributed, at least in part, to the fact that many governments are addressing critical issues such as "investment in infrastructure, the promotion of a stable investment and business environment, as well as private sector development."

The World Bank, in a *Doing Business* report issued in 2007, found that a total of 24 African countries implemented reforms during the year, making it simpler to start businesses, strengthening property rights, enhancing investor safeguards, increasing access to credit, easing tax burdens, expediting trade and reducing costs. "Doing business has become easier in some parts of Africa," the report said. It ranked Ghana and Kenya among the world's top 10 "reformer countries."

Textile factory in Lesotho: Lower tariffs and changes in government policies can do much to stimulate private investment.

Associated Press / Ben Curtis

Suspicion and obstacles

However, many African countries continue to have weak private sectors and low levels of private investment. Analysts point to a variety of factors that contribute to this shortcoming: institutional failures, weak legal systems, inadequate infrastructure, poor policies, bureaucratic red tape and unclear government regulations and operations.

Historically, domestic business has not been systematically involved in Africa's development. Following independence, some governments viewed the private sector with suspicion, while others could find few local entrepreneurs with the capital or skills to play a notable role. State-owned enterprises therefore emerged as the main institutions for promoting the development of Africa's industry and infrastructure.

Many countries across Africa are carrying out reforms to create a "sound and conducive environment for private sector activities," as specified by NEPAD.

"Over the years, private sector involvement became an afterthought," explains Emmanuel Nnadozie, chief of the NEPAD Support Unit of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). But that has begun to change, he adds. "There is more realization that the private sector is the engine of growth and cannot be ignored in Africa's development process."

Whether a domestic company can bring in "money, skills, business expertise or develops new businesses around existing projects," argues Ini Urua, the NEPAD division manager of the African Development Bank (ADB), "the [private] sector is essential.

Peer pressure

One means for encouraging African countries to move business closer to the centre stage is the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). Established in 2003 as an initiative of NEPAD, it is a system of voluntary "self-monitoring" through which African countries review each others' political and economic management. In addition to drawing attention to such political issues as democracy and human rights, it helps participating countries look closely at their systems of corporate and economic governance.

At a roundtable on strengthening investment and reform in NEPAD countries, held in Zambia in November, Kojo Busia, the head of the ECA's APRM Support Unit, noted that such peer reviews help countries identify further reforms they should carry out. Following up on such commitments, he added, "is perhaps the most crucial stage in contributing towards improving the investment climate of APRM-participating countries."

Kenya completed its first peer review in 2006, and out of that process launched an ambitious programme to reform its business-licensing procedures. Previously there were more than 1,300 separate regulatory measures on the books affecting businesses. To build a warehouse, for instance, a company had to complete 10 different steps, including obtaining a building permit, seeking approval of project plans and architectural drawings from the municipal authority, and obtaining an occupancy certificate. Over the last two years, 118 licensing requirements were eliminated and eight others simplified. The World Bank expects that another 900 will be simplified or removed in the near future.

So far, 27 African countries have signed on to the APRM process. Those demonstrating a willingness to reform by joining the peer review process may expect increased support. One source of backing is the Investment Climate Facility (ICF) for Africa, which is headquartered in Dar es

Peter Arnold, Inc. / Jorgen Schytte

Building a road in Tanzania: Unfortunately, private sector involvement in infrastructure projects in Africa has been limited.

Salaam, Tanzania, and finances projects aimed at improving the continent's business environment. It provides assistance only to countries that have joined the APRM. The ICF has been endorsed by African leaders and is financed by multinational corporations, the governments of the UK, Ireland and the Netherlands, the European Commission and the World Bank's International Finance Corporation.

The ICF's first project, in Rwanda, is helping the government establish a commercial court to speed up the process of resolving business disputes and creating a new agency that will handle all the steps for registering a company or small business. When the project is completed, ICF Chief Executive Omari Issa told *Africa Renewal*, "it should be possible to register a business within days, either online or from any province, instead of several weeks." Previously, companies could be registered only in the capital, Kigali.

Capacities limited

Even where governments have become more favourable to private business involvement, the size and nature of the sector can be a hindrance. "Most businesses are largely family-owned," notes Mr. Urua of the ADB. "They don't want to open up and that is a big drawback."

Beyond willingness, there is the problem of ability. At an international business forum organized by the NEPAD Business Group in Nigeria in 2005, Nigeria's then President Olusegun Obasanjo noted that businesses in Africa confront serious constraints of "capacity and capital," although "they remain vital to the NEPAD process."

A 2006 report by the UN Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, surveying the role of the private sector in West, East and Southern Africa, found that in comparison with foreign firms, domestic companies have been less involved in the implementation of NEPAD projects. The report attributed this to the greater capacity of foreign firms for undertaking construction projects.

New Partnership for Africa's Development

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was adopted as the continent's main development framework at a July 2001 summit meeting of African heads of state. According to NEPAD, attainment of Africa's long-term development goals is anchored in the determination of African peoples "to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalizing world." It calls for a new relationship between Africa and the international community, in which the non-African partners seek to complement Africa's own efforts. The United Nations, Group of Eight industrialized nations and various donor countries have pledged to do so.

For Africa to develop, argues NEPAD, three conditions must prevail:

- peace, security, democracy and good political governance
- improved economic and corporate governance
- regional cooperation and integration.

NEPAD further identifies several priority sectors requiring special attention and action:

- physical infrastructure, especially roads, railways and power systems linking neighbouring countries
- information and communications technology
- human development, focusing on health, education and skills development
- agriculture
- promoting the diversification of production and exports.

Many of the required resources will initially need to come from outside the continent, although African governments are redoubling efforts to mobilize more domestic resources. "Africa," states NEPAD, "recognizes that it holds the key to its own development."

This domestic shortcoming is especially evident in regional projects to build roads, gas pipelines, power grids, telecommunications networks and other large-scale infrastructure linking two or more neighbouring countries. In 2002, African leaders adopted a Short-Term Action Plan (STAP) to realize selected NEPAD priorities. About half of the $7 bn to be mobilized for construction projects under the STAP was expected to come from private businesses. However, admits the ADB, "private sector participation in infrastructure investments in Africa has, so far, been somewhat limited."

Limited capital or expertise is not the only obstacle. According to Mr. Urua of the ADB, businesses also hold back because they perceive the investment climate to be poor for a variety of reasons, including political instability, inadequate national and regional policies and unclear or weak legal and regulatory structures.

Ending monopolies

Omari Issa, with the Investment Climate Facility, emphasizes the legacy of earlier state policies. The private sector, he maintains, "is willing to invest in infrastructure, but there is lack of legislation and structure to guide such investments in almost all the countries." Business, he notes, "has to compete with the state, making investment in infrastructure unattractive."

In Ghana, the state-owned Volta River Authority (VRA) has had a virtual monopoly over the bulk production and supply of electricity since 1961. It generates power from thermal plants using crude oil and from the Akosombo Dam using hydro-energy. The oil generators produce a kilowatt hour of electricity for the equivalent of 10 US cents using crude oil, while the cost with the hydro plant is just 2 cents. The VRA then sells the power to the Electricity Company of Ghana, the main state-owned distribution company, at 5–7 cents a kilowatt hour, using the profits from hydro generation to subsidize the high cost of producing with oil.

This arrangement has some drawbacks. When there is not enough rain to keep water levels in Lake Volta sufficiently high to run the dam, electricity shortages may result. The system also tends to "crowd out" independent power producers, because they simply cannot compete. The government is currently reforming the power sector to end the VRA's monopoly and make private investment more attractive.

Firmino Mucavele, chief executive of the NEPAD Secretariat, based in Johannesburg, South Africa, urges African governments "to repeal laws that create monopolies" and to set up "regulatory bodies to encourage competition."

Political will and expertise

Any attempt to implement an initiative across many countries will inevitably face serious challenges. One of the "big issues," says Mr. Urua, is achieving sufficient political will from national and regional leaders and organizations. "You are working through countries," he says, "and without tacit support at the political level, you can't drive the regional integration agenda forward."

The ADB official cited the examples of the West African gas pipeline, which is to bring natural gas from Nigeria to Benin, Togo and Ghana, and the Mozambique–South Africa natural gas pipeline. "The heads of state put their political weight behind the projects and helped to ease any regulatory issues that would have stalled them."

Another issue, Mr. Urua adds, is the ability of Africa's various regional economic groups, which are responsible for implementing NEPAD regional projects, to actually follow through. Even the stronger ones, such as the Economic Community of West African States or the Southern African Development Community, do not always have the financial resources or technical know-how to design and effectively manage the projects. "You can't develop your region," argues Mr. Urua, "if you are borrowing technical expertise all the time without developing your own."

However great the challenges, many agree that much more needs to be done to get the private sector better involved in making the NEPAD initiative a reality. And now is the time, affirms Lynette Chen, head of the NEPAD Business Foundation in South Africa. "NEPAD is only six years old and needed a long process of planning." However, she says, "We are at the implementation stage now." ■

Enlisting men

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make a particular decision: "Aren't you man enough to make decisions anymore?"

Another overheard a young woman in a mini-bus say to her friend, "I do things wrong. Of course he must beat me. How would I know if he loves me if he doesn't beat me?" When the organizer tried to explain to the young woman that no one has a right to beat her, the women and other men in the bus shouted him down.

For Mr. Khumalo, like other activists, the passion for his work lies in his hopes for a safer society, not only for his wife and sisters, but also for his daughter. "I want to contribute to a society in which I do not have to be my wife's protector," he says. "I want to contribute so that my daughter can walk without fear of being violated by men. I want her to be able to grow up and respect herself for who she is and live accordingly. I want a society in which my wife and daughter are able to live without such fears." ■

East Africa

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collection losses of up to $600,000 due to the disruptions in trade.

Air traffic between Rwanda, Burundi and Kenya declined because of the high cost of aviation fuel. Kenya Airways, the largest carrier in the region, also suspended direct flights to Paris, affecting passengers from Burundi, Rwanda, DRC, Seychelles and Comoros who had to switch to longer and more expensive routes. Bus companies servicing the Nairobi-Kampala and Nairobi-Kigali routes also cut down on trips because of insecurity and the slowness of secure convoys.

Relief aid endangered

Another concern is the disruption in the flow of food aid and other humanitarian assistance to some 7 million refugees and displaced people in the region. The survival of many of them depends on direct support from the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and other relief groups. The WFP moves 1,000 tonnes of food out of Mombasa port every day of the year. According to Alistair Cook, a WFP logistics officer, long closures of the route threaten to leave refugees facing starvation. "It's a very worrying problem," WFP spokesperson Peter Smerdon told the UN Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN).

The alternative route through Tanzania is 20 per cent more expensive and takes two weeks longer. The relief aid would first have to travel 1,000 km by road from Mombasa to Dar es Salaam, then another 980 km by rail to WFP's storage and milling plants in Isaka, western Tanzania. From there it would have to cross Lake Victoria to Port Bell, Uganda, by boat, then go by truck to southern Sudan and the DRC.

Mr. Holmes told the Security Council that the Kenya events have prompted OCHA to look at such contingencies. But transport through a peaceful Kenya, he added, "remains by far the preferred option."

Refugees are another concern. Currently only Uganda is hosting refugees from Kenya, about 12,000. Renewed conflict could create bigger flows of Kenyans to neighbouring countries, some of which are still politically unstable. The humanitarian consequences of new disruptions, said Mr. Holmes, "could dwarf anything we have seen so far."

Kenya itself hosts about 90,000 refugees from southern Sudan and another 160,000 from Somalia. Further instability in Kenya could compromise food delivery and other services to these refugees.

Overdependance exposed

The crisis has exposed the rest of the region's "overreliance" on Kenya's transport infrastructure, especially Mombasa port, notes Abe Selassie, the International Monetary Fund representative in Uganda. Efforts to reduce this dependency have been planned for some years, but none has been completed. The Kenya pipeline, which currently carries fuel supplies to depots in western Kenya, was to be extended to Uganda to reduce costs and to avoid the need to transport fuel by road to Uganda, Rwanda, eastern DRC and Burundi. But the project is behind schedule.

Panos / Sven Torfinn

A truck set on fire by Kenyan protesters: The blockage of highways and rail lines during the crisis seriously disrupted trade with neighbouring countries.

Fuel and other imports to Uganda can be transported via Tanzania, but that road ends at Lake Victoria and the products then have to be shipped across the lake. Uganda has no ships in good operating order.

In January, Rwanda signed an agreement to obtain petroleum products from the main port of Dar es Salaam by rail. But the distances and poor state of Tanzanian roads and railways makes this expensive. Analysts argue that with improvements in its infrastructure, Tanzania could become a bigger player in the region's economy.

Speaking at a February meeting of bankers from the East African Community (EAC), the regional body's Secretary-General Juma Mwapachu said that the economic dislocation so far — and the threat of further disruptions if normality is not soon restored — is especially worrying to the community's five member states. "We need to address the question of integrated infrastructure," he said, so that "in future we avoid the after-effects of a crisis like the one now in Kenya." Much of the meeting's discussion revolved around how to strengthen alternative transport routes.

Investor confidence

There is a serious danger that the Kenyan crisis could lead investors to reexamine their earlier perceptions of the country's stability, says Razia Khan, the head of Africa research for the UK's Standard Chartered Bank. This could erode investor confidence not just in Kenya, "but more widely in Africa."

Business is already paying a high price. Many of the processed and industrial goods bought in the region come from Kenyan factories run by local and international investors. Kenya Manufacturing Association Chairman Steven Smith estimates that industry lost 35 per cent of its business in January and anticipates a 20 per cent decline in production by April. Kenya's economy, he says, could lose about 3 per cent of its growth in gross domestic product, due to loss of staff and business opportunities, dampening growth in the rest of the region as well.

The Kenyan political crisis, EAC Secretary-General Mwapachu told local

media, "imposes a difficult and complex environment for the EAC, for investment promotion and for business players alike." Regional trade flows have slowed, and tax and business revenues have declined, he noted. "We can only promote and attract investments sustainably, as well as assure effective intra-regional trade, if we have enduring peace and stability."

Risks and opportunities

For some countries in the region, Kenya's economic disruptions not only pose a risk, but may also offer potential opportunities. Until recently, Kenya was a leading producer of pyrethrum, an extract used to make some of the safest and most effective insecticides. In 1998, Kenya exported 13,000 tonnes, 90 per cent of world output. The flower from which pyrethrum is extracted is grown in the Rift Valley, the region most affected by the violence. This year planting has yet to take place. Rwanda and Tanzania also grow the product, and Rwanda's pyrethrum processing company recently attracted foreign investment to help triple production.

However, meeting import regulations in Europe and the US takes time. If buyers do not get enough supplies quickly, the shortages could prompt them to switch to synthetic substitutes, and farmers throughout East Africa could lose out. "Our customers have to invest a lot of money in producing products that contain pyrethrum," Manfred Pfersich of the Kenya Pyrethrum Information Centre in Austria told reporters. "If they're not sure of the supply, they would rather invest in something else."

Kenya is also the world's leading exporter of black tea, but the crisis, along with drought, will reduce its crop by 7 per cent, estimates the Kenya Tea Board. Sri Lanka, the second-largest supplier, is already earning more because of the shortages and higher world prices. "Kenya's political situation is to our advantage," says Lalith Hettiarachchi, chairman of the Sri Lanka Tea Board.

Kenya also provides 36 per cent of Europe's cut flowers, as well as fruits and vegetables. Forty percent of Kenya's horticultural exports are grown on farms in the Rift Valley. Interruptions in those exports could prove a boon to farmers in Egypt, Morocco and some West African countries.

Tourism, Kenya's main revenue earner, was initially forecast to bring in $1 bn in 2008. The Kenya Tourism Board expects the sector to recover quickly now that there appears to be a resolution to the crisis. But renewed violence could encourage a shift towards other countries in the region with similar climates and wildlife attractions. "There is no shortage of beach destinations to compete against our beaches in Mombasa," acknowledged Fred Kaigwa, chief executive of Kenya Tour Operators. "Charter companies are unlikely to cancel and would most likely divert to countries such as Tanzania, Mauritius, Botswana and South Africa."

Renewed violence in Kenya and its potential repercussions throughout the region prompted considerable donor pressure for a quick and meaningful resolution. With the signing of the power-sharing agreement, that seems to be the direction the country is heading. But analysts agree that much needs to be done to make sure the peace is sustained. "We can't afford to fail," says Mr. Annan. "This is not about the fortunes of political parties or individuals. This is about Kenya and the region." ■

Kenyan livelihoods up in smoke

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that as of February up to 600,000 Kenyans were directly affected by the post-election violence and 250,000 remained in camps for displaced people. Although a power-sharing agreement was signed with the aim of resolving the crisis, thousands face the challenge of coping with the loss of homes, property and livelihoods.

Many small businesses — which employ 75 per cent of the work force — were looted, burned or closed as owners fled. In the Nairobi slum of Kibera, home to more than 1 million urban poor, 800 business stalls were razed, six schools destroyed, 900 houses torched and thousands displaced. In other Nairobi neighbourhoods gangs burned and looted the homes of 3,920 people and some 228 small business kiosks and stalls. Kisumu, in western Kenya, lost 80 per cent of its businesses. The Mumias, Kibos and Muhoroni sugar enterprises, which employ 40,000 directly (and indirectly support the livelihoods of another 450,000), curtailed production after cane fields and equipment were destroyed. On the Kenyan coast, some 20,000 tourism jobs disappeared.

In the Rift Valley, 80,000 houses were torched. Provincial officials estimate $1.8 mn will be needed to rebuild more than 28 destroyed schools. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that 75 per cent of those displaced in the Rift Valley are destitute.

The Rift Valley is Kenya's breadbasket, and the province's commissioner, Hassan Noor Hassan, estimates that 3 mn bags of maize were destroyed in the violence. The FAO reported in January that the insecurity made it impossible for farmers to harvest nearly 20 per cent of the undestroyed cereal crop. Worse, notes a February OCHA report, "less than 10 per cent of land has been prepared for planting season," although normally at least 80 per cent would have been planted by that time. In western Kenya, 40 per cent of displaced farmers had not yet returned to their farms by February.

Even with the political crisis seemingly resolved, warns OCHA, the loss of some 500,000 jobs means that banditry will continue to rise "as more people resort to crime in order to survive." David Nalo, Kenya's permanent secretary for trade and industry, acknowledges that until small businesses revive, "Kenya's economy cannot substantially recover."

Ethnic targeting prompted many people to flee occupations in the Rift Valley and central provinces. Two of seven public universities remained closed in February because of insecurity and lack of lecturers. Some 10,000 of the country's 230,000 teachers had not reported to their classrooms at the end of January. Six hundred primary and 1,000 secondary and tertiary teachers asked for transfers back to their home provinces.

The flight of people back to their home provinces has raised concerns that employers may start hiring natives of each province for local operations to avoid future labour disruptions. Central Bank Governor Njuguna Ndungu worries that if the government does not intervene, hiring policies could become "based on preferences of location and ethnic group rather than merit."

More policy freedom or belt-tightening?

New IMF programme targets 'graduates' of austerity plans

By **Gumisai Mutume**

Rather than "graduating" from the much-criticized economic reform programmes promoted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a number of African countries are opting to sign on to an extended version. The Fund describes its new Policy Support Instrument (PSI), introduced in 2005, as a "non-financial mechanism." Unlike other IMF programmes, it does not come with any direct financing from the Fund. Instead countries receive IMF advice, monitoring and endorsement of their policies. So far six countries, all of them African, have signed on to the instrument, and more are considering doing so.

Under the PSIs, the IMF helps low-income countries design their economic programmes. If a country manages to meet set standards, the Fund then informs donors, multilateral development banks and private financiers that the country has "strong policies." The targets set in PSIs are derived from earlier IMF and World Bank programmes and reviews are carried out every six months.

Some countries with PSIs, such as Mozambique, are already finding that these conditions make it difficult for them to spend more money to improve education and meet other internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

"It is basically a standard IMF programme without the loans, but with the standard 'structural adjustment' provisions (privatization, liberalization, spending cuts, etc.), and the usual very low inflation targets," argues Soren Ambrose of the Kenya-based non-governmental organization (NGO) Solidarity Africa Network. If a PSI country fails to attain IMF certification, he adds, the consequences can be serious. "When the IMF cuts a country off, the other official agencies generally follow suit. It is this 'gatekeeper' function, rather than the IMF's loans, that give it its greatest power."

A good IMF report makes it easier for a country to obtain World Bank loans and debt relief or to have its debt restructured at the Paris Club, a group of rich creditor governments. Such "cross-conditionality" can be a powerful instrument. Some poor countries that would otherwise not be eligible for relatively lower-interest loans from international money markets are turning to the PSI to get the IMF endorsement. Therefore, Mr. Ambrose maintains, the PSI potentially "seduces or pressures countries into signing on," instead of permitting them to move away from IMF programmes altogether.

So far Cape Verde, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, Senegal and Uganda have signed on to PSIs, and Ghana is currently negotiating the terms of one.

Alamy Images / Juergen Effner

Mozambique hopes to hire many more teachers for its overcrowded schools, but the low inflation targets set by the IMF limit public spending and may jeopardize that goal.

IMF seal of approval

In a statement explaining the PSIs, the IMF argues that it is performing a needed service by "signalling" its views on policies to private creditors and donors "who may be interested in reassurance about the countries they are supporting." The IMF had already been playing such a role in low-income countries through its lending programme, the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF). "A number of countries — what we call mature stabilizers — said 'We want to graduate from the PRGF, but we want to have the framework that can signal very strong policies'," explains Patricia Alonso-Gamo of the IMF's Policy Development and Review Department. "They didn't want to have what other countries had at the time: intensified surveillance or fund-monitored programmes. They said 'We want something stronger that is endorsed by the Fund's Executive Board, and we can tell the world we have strong policies.' So it was very much demand-driven."

In efforts to recover from economic crises, most countries in sub-Saharan Africa began implementing IMF- and World Bank–led structural adjustment programmes during the 1980s. Those programmes promoted policies to expand the role of the market and reduce that of the state in economic affairs. They curtailed public spending for education and health care, privatized state-owned enterprises and liberalized trade. "African governments had to cede control over their eco-

nomic decision-making in order to qualify for World Bank and IMF loans," notes Africa Action, a US-based NGO.

Public discontent mounted over the social impact of these programmes as large numbers of workers lost their jobs and many poor people could not afford the rising costs of health care and education. In response to the protests and criticisms, the IMF and World Bank shifted course. They now require governments to prepare antipoverty programmes in consultation with civil society and other stakeholders in order to receive new loans or debt relief. The IMF renamed its structural adjustment lending facility the PRGF.

Access to cheap loans

One of the main motivations for countries to sign on to a PSI is that IMF endorsement makes it easier for them to borrow on international money markets at relatively low interest rates after "graduating" from a PRGF. Regarded as a "mature stabilizer," Ghana decided not to renew its PRGF programme last year and is currently negotiating the terms of a PSI with the IMF. Having exhausted existing avenues for grants and concessional loans from the World Bank and the IMF, the country estimates that it needs to borrow $750 mn from commercial financial markets for infrastructure projects. Such infrastructure investment, the IMF believes, will help raise economic growth to 8.5 per cent per year and put Ghana on track towards middle-income status.

"In the long run," says Roger Nord, assistant director of the IMF's Africa Department, "growth and employment are not going to come from more foreign aid. They are going to come from private investment."

Ghanaian government officials maintain that the conditions attached to earlier PRGF loans were onerous and excessive, prompting its decision to consider a PSI. Such conditionality has been one of the most controversial aspects of IMF and World Bank lending. Critics often claim that the institutions do not pay adequate attention to the social impact of the conditions or the sometimes contradictory ways in which multiple conditions interact with one another. Many governments feel that the conditions infringe on their sovereignty and fail to address the basic structural problems hindering their economic development.

On average, poor countries face 67 conditions per loan from the World Bank, according to a study by Eurodad, a network of European NGOs. In extreme cases, there can be as many as 200 conditions, as in a World Bank poverty-reduction grant to Uganda in 2005.

The IMF has increased its own use of conditionality since the 1990s and has extended its conditions beyond the Fund's traditional fields of monetary and fiscal policy into trade, pricing, marketing, public sector management, public enterprises, agriculture and energy, and recently even to governance, an area in which it previously did not claim to have expertise. As a result, notes Eurodad, criticisms of IMF conditionality have "tended to centre on its loss of focus, on imposing an excessive number of structural conditions, trying to do too many things at the same time, and on expanding Fund influence beyond its area of competence."

Conditionality has been one of the most controversial aspects of IMF and World Bank lending. Critics often claim that the institutions do not pay adequate attention to the social impact of the conditions, and governments feel that the conditions infringe on sovereignty.

After Tanzania signed on to a PSI, the *East African*, a regional newspaper, commented that "even without receiving IMF funds, the country will still be subject to IMF conditionalities."

The Ghanaian government hopes to see a reduction in the number of conditions it will have to meet under a PSI, although that remains to be seen. Finance Minister Kwadwo Baah-Wiredu says that his "government sees this as a major turning point in the economic history of Ghana and will be approaching it with all the necessary precautions."

Action Aid International, a South African–headquartered antipoverty group, conducted a comparison of PRGFs and PSIs in Uganda, Cape Verde, Tanzania and Mozambique and found little difference between the two mechanisms. In Uganda both programmes set similar targets on inflation and antipoverty spending. In Cape Verde, the PSI requires the government to limit inflation and refrain from new short-term borrowing and sets detailed benchmarks for financial sector reform. Where comparisons are possible, reports Action Aid International, the PSIs appear to carry over PRGF standards, but with incrementally more ambitious targets. Basically, argues the group, the IMF continues to play a major role in managing the economies of these poor countries, something it does not attempt to do in wealthier nations.

No money for teachers

The IMF commonly insists that governments set low inflation targets. Mozambique, under a PSI, now has a lower inflation target than it did in its last PRGF. In theory, keeping inflation down is good. But if government spending is curtailed excessively to help achieve that goal, other problems can emerge.

In Mozambique, notes Action Aid International, it means that the government will not be able to hire more teachers to reduce the overcrowding in schools. The current pupil-teacher ratio is 72:1, but the government's Education for All initiative recommends reducing it to 40:1. Unless the government significantly increases spending to recruit more teachers, it will only attain a ratio of 50:1 by 2015.

Mozambique is also facing difficulties reaching the universal primary education target set under the MDGs, notes Action Aid International in a 2007 report, *The IMF's Policy Support Instrument: Expanded Fiscal Space or Continued Belt-Tightening?*

In 2004, the government and IMF agreed under the PRGF to limit spending on the government wage bill to 6.5 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP). Teachers account for 35 per cent of all government employees, so the following year Mozambique was able to hire only

4,700 teachers, instead of the 11,500 it needed. The IMF then agreed to raise the ceiling to 7.5 per cent of GDP in 2006, allowing the recruitment of 9,000 new teachers. However, notes the Action Aid International study, the IMF and Ministry of Finance also further lowered the PRGF's inflation target and agreed to cut back government borrowing even more. "These policies also appear in the new PSI," observes Action Aid International. "Overly prudent macroeconomic policies mean that there is little scope now to raise the wage bill ceiling higher even though more teachers are needed in schools."

The PSI does allow priority sectors such as education and health to receive a major share of the national budget, Action Aid International acknowledges, but not enough to "allow for the scaling-up required to meet the MDGs and the Education for All objectives. As a result, Mozambique will fall short of its target to provide quality primary education to all children by 2015."

Continued IMF relevance?

The PSI is open to countries that were successfully implementing an IMF/World Bank poverty reduction programme or that qualify for the PRGF. However, says Ms. Alonso-Gamo of the IMF, the new plan was specifically designed for "mature stabilizers" — countries that have regularly achieved reasonable growth rates and low inflation levels, that possess adequate international financial reserves and that have begun to achieve manageable levels of debt. Some of these countries no longer need IMF financial assistance and have asked to "graduate" from the PRGF, while still maintaining ties with the Fund, she explains.

Action Aid International, however, sees the introduction of the PSI as an attempt by the IMF to remain relevant in a changing international monetary environment. The PSI was unveiled amid growing questions about the role of the IMF in the global economy. In 2005, when the PSI was launched, the Group of Eight industrialized nations announced the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative, which would, for the first time, cancel 100 per cent of the debts owed to the IMF by some of its most impoverished client countries. The elimination of these countries' debt obligations has raised the possibility that some could consider foregoing further IMF involvement.

"The PSI was apparently designed for newly unburdened countries that might be tempted to chart their own course, as an enticement to remain in the IMF fold," notes Action Aid International. It was also introduced at a time when early repayments by the IMF's largest debtors, such as Argentina, raised wider questions about whether middle-income countries would stop working with the IMF, possibly provoking financial shortfalls for the Fund.

As a result, comments Action Aid International, the Fund may be seeking to "adjust its image as the tough lender and disciplinarian to a more collegial sort of adviser. But even as the IMF tries to adopt a gentler image, the policies contained in PSIs remain consistent with the standard IMF austerity programmes that have proved deeply controversial over the last 25 years." ■

Alamy Images / Juergen Effner

Earth movers at a Ghana construction site. The government hopes that a new IMF agreement will make it easier to secure commercial loans for major road and other infrastructure projects.

Protecting children

from page 4

October 2006 between the government and a rebel group in the east, some 250 children are being demobilized there.

- In Somalia, both the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the Union of Islamic Courts enlisted children during the intense fighting for Mogadishu at the end of 2006. But since June 2007, the TFG, which now controls the city, has been releasing children from its ranks.
- The insurgent Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda has been notorious for abducting children to fight and serve as sex slaves. The LRA now operates mainly across the border in southern Sudan, from which scores of children have escaped or been rescued by Ugandan or allied southern Sudanese forces.

To counter the persistence of such practices, the Secretary-General has encouraged the Security Council to consider "targeted measures," including sanctions, against those groups that systematically harm children. He also proposes that all future UN peacekeeping missions include child protection advisers and urges all countries to bring to justice those responsible for the military recruitment or other abuses of children. ■

AFRICA AGENDA

7–8 April 2008, Tokyo (Japan) — 9th Africa Partnership Forum. A framework for policy dialogue between Africa and the industrialized countries' Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the forum will focus on climate change, economic growth and poverty reduction. Tel (33) 1 45 24 87 75, fax (33) 1 44 30 61 33, e-mail <apf.contact@oecd.org>, website <www.africapartnershipforum.org/>

16–18 April 2008, Dakar (Senegal) — International Conference on Renewable Energy in Africa. Jointly organized by the African Union, government of Senegal, German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development and UN Industrial Development Organization. Contact Massata Cissé, tel (431) 26026 3745, fax (431) 26026 6820, e-mail <m.cisse@unido.org>, website <www.unido.org/en/doc/76539>

22–24 April 2008, Abuja (Nigeria) — West African Biofuels Summit 2008. Contact Abiodun Olaniyi, e-mail <info@westafricabiofuels.net> or <jakolgate@gmail.com>, website <www.westafricabiofuels.net>

28–30 April 2008, Hamburg (Germany) — Europe-Africa Business Summit. Contact James Kajete, tel (49) 551 30 77 161, fax (49) 551 30 77 140, e-mail <kajete@nepadcouncil.org>, website <www.europeafricabusinesssummit.org>

6–8 May 2008, Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) — Agro-Industry 2008: Harvesting Business and Investment Opportunities in Southern Africa. Contact Joachim Eissler, tel (32) 2 743 89 49, fax (32) 2 732 71 11, e-mail <peu@agro-ind2008.com>, website <www.agro-ind2008.com>

28–30 May 2008, Yokohama (Japan) — 4th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD). Organized by Japan, World Bank, UN Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) and UN Development Programme (UNDP). Contact Nicholas Gouede, tel (1) 212 906 5931, e-mail <nicholas.gouede@undp.org>, website <www.undp.org/ticad2>

28–30 May 2008, Accra (Ghana) — 3rd International Conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training. Contact Rebecca Stromeyer, tel (49) 30 310 1818 0, fax (49) 30 324 98 33, e-mail <info@elearning-africa.com>, website <www.elearning-africa.com>

3–5 June 2008, Rome (Italy) — High-Level Conference on World Food Security and the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy. Organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Tel (39) 06 57051, fax (39) 06 570 53064, e-mail <cccb-secretariat@fao.org>, website <www.fao.org/foodclimate>

24–28 June 2008, Kampala (Uganda) — Groundwater and Climate in Africa. Organized by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Contact Alice Aureli, e-mail <a.aureli@unesco.org> or <info@gwclim.org>, website <www.gwclim.org>

26–27 June 2008, Cape Town (South Africa) — 3rd International Conference on e-Learning. Tel (44) 1189 724148, fax (44) 1189 724691, e-mail <info@academic-conferences.org>, website <www.academic-conferences.org>

7–9 July 2008, Hokkaido (Japan) — Group of Eight Summit. Website <www.mofa.go.jp>

WHAT HAS TAKEN PLACE

13–15 February 2008, Vienna (Austria) — 1st International Conference on Human Trafficking. Organized by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. Tel (43) 1 26060-0, e-mail <viennaforum@unov.org> or <UN.GIFT@unvienna.org>, website <www.ungift.org>

10–14 March 2008, Accra (Ghana) — 2nd Global Summit on HIV/AIDS, Traditional Medicine and Indigenous Knowledge. Organized by Africa First (USA), and supported by Ghana's Ministry of Health, World Health Organization and Ghana AIDS Commission, among others. Contact J. William Danquah, tel (1) 651 646 4721, fax (1) 651 644 3235, e-mail <info@africa-first.com>, website <http://africa-first.com/2hivsummit2008/>

26–28 March 2008, Tunis (Tunisia) — 1st African Water Week. Hosted by the African Ministers' Council on Water and the African Development Bank (ADB). Contact Arthur M. Swatson, tel (216) 7110 2672, fax (216) 7110 3744, e-mail <AfricanWaterWeek@afdb.org>, website < www.afdb.org/aww>

AFRICA BOOKS

Gender and Genocide in Burundi: The Search for Spaces of Peace in the Great Lakes Region by Patricia O. Daley (Indiana University Press, Indiana, USA, 2008; 280 pp; pb $24.95)

Kenya's Quest for Democracy: Taming Leviathan by Makau Mutua (Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, CO, USA, 2008; 340 pp; hb $35)

Kenya: Identity of a Nation by Godfrey Mwakikagile (New Africa Press, Pretoria, South Africa, 2007; 240 pp; pb $17.95)

The Failure of Democracy in the Republic of Congo by John F. Clark (Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, CO, USA, 2008; 309 pp; hb $35)

Bad Samaritans: The Myth of Free Trade and the Secret History of Capitalism, Ha-Joon Chang (Bloomsbury Press, London, UK, 2007; 276 pp; hb $26.95)

Biopiracy of Biodiversity: Global Exchange as Enclosure by Andrew Mushita and Carol B. Thompson (Africa World Press, NJ, USA, 2007; 344 pp; pb $29.95)

Creating a World Without Poverty: Social Business and the Future of Capitalism by Muhammad Yunus (PublicAffairs, New York, USA; 261 pp; hb $25)

Preventing Genocide: Practical Steps Towards Early Detection and Effective Action by David A. Hamburg (Paradigm Publishers, Boulder, CO, USA, 2008; 352 pp; hb $29.95)

Démocratie et éducation à la citoyenneté en Afrique by Mamadou Bella Balde (L'Harmattan, Paris, France, 2008; 256 pp; €24.50)

La femme dans la gestion des conflits en Afrique précoloniale: Traditions, sociétés et pouvoir dans la région des Grands Lacs by Jean-Jacques Purusi Sadiki (L'Harmattan, Paris, France, 2008; 210 pp; €20)

Congo-Brazzaville : Autopsie d'une crise politique cyclique, eds. Frédéric Bobongo, Romulad Bienvenu Gobert, Modeste Chouaïbou Mfenjou, Léandre Serge Moyen (L'Harmattan. Paris, France, 2008; 254 pp; €24.50)

L'Afrique subsaharienne et la mondialisation, ed. Vincent Aucante (L'Harmattan, Paris, France, 2008; 266 pp; €27)

La violence politique au Congo-Brazzaville: Devoir de mémoire contre l'impunité by Jean-Claude Mayima-Mbemba (L'Harmattan, Paris, France, 2008; 240 pp; €24)

Le développement soutenable: Evaluation simplifiée dans un contexte Nord-Sud by Georges Lanmafankpotin and Michel Lerond (L'Harmattan, Paris, France, 2007; 186 pp; €17.50)

Dans l'enfer du Darfour by Daoud Hari (Editions Flammarion, Paris, France, 2008; 256 pp; €19)

Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: The Story of UNAMSIL by 'Funmi Olonisakin (Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, CO, USA, 2007; 205 pp; hb $45, £28.50; pb $18.95, £11.95)

Les droits de l'homme à l'épreuve: Cas de la crise ivoirienne du 19 septembre 2002 by Sako Gervais Boga (L'Harmattan, Paris, France, 2008; 250 pp; €25)

Globalization and Environmental Challenges: Reconceptualizing Security in the 21st Century, eds. Hans Günter Brauch, Úrsula Oswald Spring, Patricia Kameri-Mbote et al (Springer Verlag, Berlin, Germany, 2008; 1,148 pp; hb €229, $309)

Heart of Darfur by Lisa Blaker (Hodder and Stoughton, London, UK, 2008; 352 pp; hb £12, $38.61)

Investment Opportunities and Private Sector Growth in Africa by Godfrey Mwakikagile (New Africa Press, Pretoria, South Africa, 2007; 348 pp; pb $19.95)

The Media and Conflicts in Central Africa by Marie-Soleil Frère (Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, CO, USA, 2007; 287 pp; hb $55, £34.95; pb $23.50, £14.95)

Madagascar : état, communautés villageoises et banditisme rural by Henri Rasamoelina (L'Harmattan, Paris, France, 2007; 250 pp; €22.50, FF148)

Manger au quotidien : La vulnérabilité des familles urbaines en Afrique by Virginie Briand (Karthala, Paris, France, 2008; 264 pp; €23)

Africa Is in a Mess: What Went Wrong and What Should Be Done by Godfrey Mwakikagile (New Africa Press, Pretoria, South Africa, 2006; 176 pp; pb $13.95)

AFRICA WATCH

TICAD

Japan pushes Asia-Africa ties

More than 40 African heads of state are expected to meet with leaders of Japan and other Asian countries in late May to find ways to strengthen economic and political cooperation between the two regions. This Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), scheduled for 28-30 May in Yokohama (30 kilometres south of Tokyo), will be the fourth such gathering since the first one was held in 1993. Since then, TICAD has evolved into a major global framework for policy dialogue on African development issues. It emphasizes African ownership and partnership between Africa and the international community, especially Asia. TICAD IV is being co-organized by the government of Japan, the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) and the World Bank.

"The time has come for TICAD to make a significant leap forward by effectively taking up mid- and long-term issues for five or ten years into the future," says Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Koumura. Organizers plan to focus the discussions on three broad priority areas: boosting economic growth; ensuring "human security" (including achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and consolidation of peace and democratization); and addressing environmental issues and climate change.

The last conference in 2003 recognized the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as the continent's central framework for development and international cooperation. "TICAD is working in collaboration with NEPAD to promote regional integration," notes Bouna Diouf, UNDP's TICAD director. It also aims to strengthen the African Union's efforts to advance peace and good governance and to encourage the domestic and international private sectors to invest more in Africa's development. TICAD's recommendations will be fed into the next summit meeting of the Group of Eight industrialized countries, set for July in Hokkaido, Japan. ■

GENDER VIOLENCE

UN launches global campaign to end abuse

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on 25 February launched a multi-year campaign to end violence against women. The campaign will focus on securing national and international support, and funding from governments, businesses and other institutions to tackle the problem. "Violence against women is an issue that cannot wait," Mr. Ban declared.

The campaign, known as Unite to End Violence Against Women, builds on efforts already under way by civil society groups, women's movements and agencies such as the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). It also extends the work of UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict, a multi-agency initiative that addresses rape, sexual slavery and other forms of gender violence as tools of war.

The new campaign will emphasize the need to encourage men to become more actively involved, the Secretary-General said at the launch. "I call on men around the world, Mr. Ban said, "to make clear that violence against women is an act perpetrated by a coward, and that speaking up is a badge of honour." At a press briefing, Kevin Powell, a male activist and author, said that violence against women is "one of the most critical challenges" facing humanity in the 21st century. "We need to become allies to women," he said, adding that the problem is not likely to end "until men become partners in ending violence." ■

APPOINTMENTS

UN / Marco Castro

Mr. **Jean Ping** of Gabon has been elected as the new chairman of the African Union (AU) Commission, replacing Mr. Alpha Oumar Konaré. He previously served as his country's foreign minister from 1999 to 2008 and as president of the 59th session of the UN General Assembly in 2004. He began his professional career at the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1972. He also served as president of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 1993.

WFP

The UN Secretary-General has appointed Ms. **Susana Malcorra** of Argentina as the head of the Department of Field Support, at the rank of under-secretary-general. The department was established in July 2007 to provide support to all of the UN's peace missions worldwide. Prior to this appointment, Ms. Malcorra served as chief operating officer and deputy executive director of the World Food Programme (WFP), overseeing daily emergency and humanitarian operations in more than 80 countries. Ms. Malcorra also has 25 years of experience in the private sector, including leadership roles at International Business Machines (IBM) and Telecom Argentina.

UN / Evan Schneider

Mr. **Ray Chambers** of the US has been appointed by the UN Secretary-General as his special envoy for malaria. Mr. Chambers previously was the founder and co-chairman of Malaria No More, co-founder of the National Mentoring Partnership and chairman of the Millennium Promise Alliance.

UN / Paulo Filgueiras

In January, the UN Secretary-General appointed Mr. **Cheikh Sidi Diarra** of Mali as the new UN special advisor on Africa, in addition to his existing position as high representative for the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states. Previously, Mr. Diarra served as permanent representative of Mali to the UN in New York.